

Police kill two suspected kidnappers in Rivers, rescue victim

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Spokesperson, Rivers State Police Command, Grace Iringe-Koko. Credit: Rivers State Police Command.

By Dennis Naku

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The Rivers State Police Command has said its operatives have neutralised two suspected kidnappers and rescued a female victim along Ozuaha Road in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of the state.

The command said the suspects were gunned down after they opened fire on operatives who stormed their hideout based on credible intelligence.

According to the police, the kidnappers were sharing the ransom collected from the victim's family when operatives of the Anti-Cultism Unit, acting on a tip-off, intercepted them.

The spokesperson for the state police command, SP Grace Iringe-Koko, disclosed this in a statement issued in Port Harcourt on Thursday.

Iringe-Koko said two of the criminals fell to the superior firepower of the police, while others fled into the forest with gunshot injuries, leading to the rescue of the victim, whose identity was withheld.

The statement read, "The Rivers State Police Command, in its sustained efforts to combat kidnapping and armed robbery in the state, has recorded a major breakthrough.

"In a daring operation, operatives of the command attached to the Anti-Cultism Unit, Emohua Annexe, acting on credible intelligence, successfully rescued a kidnapped female victim of Omademe Community, who was abducted on Friday, December 5, 2025, along Ozuaha Road, Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State.

“According to a report by the victim’s brother on December 9, 2025, the abductors had demanded a ransom of ₦1.2 million and threatened to kill the victim if the payment was not made promptly.”

The statement continued that the police swiftly mobilised and executed a carefully planned operation to rescue the victim.

“At about 11:30 am, police operatives, utilising intelligence-led operations, covertly stormed the kidnappers’ hideout in a forested area off Ozuaha Road and met the suspects sharing the ransom.

“Upon sighting the operatives, the heavily armed kidnappers opened fire, leading to a fierce gun battle. The police, displaying bravery and professionalism, neutralised two of the suspects, while others escaped into the forest with varying degrees of gunshot wounds.

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“The victim was rescued unhurt, and part of the ransom was recovered,” the statement added.

Iringe-Koko said exhibits recovered from the scene included one pump-action rifle, five live cartridges, two expended cartridges and one locally made pistol, all of which are currently in police custody as investigations continue.

Reacting, the Commissioner of Police in the state, Olugbenga Adepaju, commended the operatives for their courage and dedication, expressing satisfaction over the successful rescue of the victim.

Adepaju assured residents of the command’s commitment to maintaining law and order and urged members of the public with credible information on the fleeing suspects to assist the police.

He also directed that investigations be expedited to apprehend the suspects at large and recover the remaining ransom to ensure the perpetrators are brought to justice.

“The command will continue to work tirelessly to ensure that Rivers State remains safe and secure for all residents and visitors,” the statement concluded.

Rivers State has, in recent years, grappled with a surge in kidnapping and other violent crimes, particularly along major roads and rural corridors, prompting intensified security operations by law enforcement agencies.

In response, the Rivers State Police Command has strengthened intelligence-led policing, deploying specialised units such as the Anti-Cultism Unit and tactical teams to dismantle criminal networks and rescue victims. The command has repeatedly warned criminal elements to desist from unlawful activities, stressing that operatives would respond decisively to any threat to public safety.

PUNCH Online has reported several similar operations in the state in recent months, including arrests of suspected kidnappers and armed robbers, recovery of firearms, and the rescue of abducted victims.

The police have maintained that these sustained operations are part of broader efforts to restore confidence, ensure the safety of residents and visitors, and curb the activities of criminal gangs operating within the state.